

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1153

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 06442

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, GT, BH

SUBJECT: KISSINGER-CROSLAND TALK: BELIZE

REF: LONDON 6421

1. TEXT OF OFFICIAL FCO MINUTE OF DISCUSSION OF BELIZE
QUESTION FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT: KISSINGER SAID THAT THE
GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT HAD ASKED HIM TO STRESS TO THE
BRITISH THE NEED THAT FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THEM
OVER BELIZE SHOULD BE "IN GOOD FAITH." THE GUATEMALANS
WERE CLEARLY PREOCCUPIED ABOUT THE RISK THAT THE CUBANS
MIGHT PROFIT FROM ANY DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION.
PALLISER SAID THAT WE HOPED THAT IN TURN KISSINGER WOULD
TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPLAINING TO THE GUATEMALANS
THAT THE LONGER THE SETTLEMENT IN BELIZE WERE DELAYED THE
MORE DANGER THERE WOULD BE OF ADVERSE DEVELOPMENTS. HE
SAID THAT THE POSITION MIGHT JUST BE HELD IF BELIZE WERE
TO GET INDEPENDENCE UNDER THEIR PRESENT REGIME. KISSIN-
GER SAID THAT THE GUATEMALANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANY
SETTLEMENT DEPENDED ON THEIR GETTING A SLICE OF SOUTHERN
BELIZE. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO SETTLE FOR NOTHING
BUT THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR A GOOD DEAL LESS THAN THEY
WERE CURRENTLY DEMANDING IF THEIR ACCESS TO THE CARIBBEAN
COULD BE SLIGHTLY EXTENDED. PALLISER COMMENTED THAT THE
TROUBLE WAS THAT ALL THOSE CONCERNED BELIEVED, RIGHTLY OR
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WRONGLY, THAT THE DISPUTED AREA CONTAINED OIL. END TEXT.

2. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT OFFICIAL BRITISH RECORD OF CONVERSATION OMITTS PALLISER'S COMMENT THAT TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT IS "NOT IMPOSSIBLE" WHICH WAS RECORDED BY AMBASSADOR (REFTEL). AMBASSADOR CALLED FCO NOTETAKER, EWEN FERGUSON, TO INQUIRE ABOUT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN HER RECORD AND THAT OF FCO. FERGUSON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD OMITTED PALLISER'S COMMENT, SAYING THAT HE HAD DONE SO BECAUSE HE "KNEW PALLISER'S INTENTIONS" IN THIS REGARD AND FELT THAT HIS STATEMENT WAS MEANT "IN VERY NEGATIVE FASHION." HE ADDED THAT PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN "IS FIRMLY ON RECORD WITH KISSINGER ON THIS MATTER." FERGUSON THEN NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE "POLITICALLY VERY DIFFICULT FOR THIS GOVERNMENT" TO AGREE TO CESSION OF TERRITORY TO GUATEMALA.

3. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR TO US THAT FERGUSON SANITIZED PALLISER'S INDISCRETION ON TERRITORIAL QUESTION, AS HE DID NOT WANT IT CIRCULATED IN MINUTES WHICH ARE SEEN BY MIDDLE LEVELS OF FCO. IN VIEW OF EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THIS ISSUE, PLEASE PROTECT ALL CONCERNED.

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